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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HARRIS).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 25, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ANDY HARRIS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2014, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

UMITA AND UMRA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about H.R. 899, the Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act, which will be considered

by the House later this week. I realize, Mr. Speaker, that this name doesn't come trippingly off the tongue, but it is an important piece of legislation.

Every year, Federal agencies impose thousands of regulatory mandates on local governments and small businesses. Those mandates are often costly, stretching city and State budgets and making it harder for businesses in North Carolina and around the country to grow and add jobs.

UMITA will force Washington to think much more carefully about regulatory costs before passing them on to small businesses and local governments. This bill will ensure that regulations are enacted only when the benefits to be gleaned by a rule outweigh the costs imposed by the rule.

Ultimately, this bill is about transparency and accountability, something Democrats and Republicans can support with equal fervor.

Mr. Speaker, I began the process of writing this legislation in 2007. Knowing that it takes a lot of creativity and hard work to pass legislation, I sat down with my staff to think about legislative ideas that could gain sufficient bipartisan support to be enacted.

We started looking at the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995, which cleared a Republican Congress before being signed by President Clinton. UMRA was a model for bipartisan legislating, so we looked to it for ideas.

The guiding principle of UMRA was that the American people would be better served by a government that regulates only on the basis of good information, including a cost-benefit analysis. UMRA was a good bill, but over time, shortcomings have become apparent. Multiple administrations over the past 19 years have attempted to fix loopholes in UMRA via executive actions.

Additionally, independent regulatory agencies have become far more prevalent in the intervening years, so it is very important to make sure they are

bound by the same transparency requirements as other regulatory bodies.

To address these issues, we drafted the Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act. UMITA will codify these executive fixes and fix some currently unaddressed loopholes to make sure that Federal agencies are in compliance with the spirit of UMRA.

Mr. Speaker, like UMRA, UMITA is bipartisan legislation. Three out of four cosponsors are Democrats. This bill has gained bipartisan support because it is purely about good government, fostering openness and honesty about the cost of regulations. Specifically, UMITA will require government's independent regulatory agencies to analyze the cost of their proposed mandates before they are imposed on the public; treat "changes to conditions of grant aid" as mandates, guarantee the public always has the opportunity to weigh in on regulations; and equip Congress and the American people with better tools to determine the true cost of regulations.

Finally, H.R. 899 will ensure government is held accountable for following these rules. If the requirements set for by UMRA and UMITA are not met, a judicial stay may be placed upon regulations.

UMITA is a bipartisan solution to a bipartisan problem: unaccountable Federal agencies damaging our economy with poorly considered regulations.

I look forward to broad support from my colleagues from both sides of the aisle when it is considered on Friday.

REMINGTON TO ALABAMA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BROOKS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROOKS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, last week the Tennessee Valley of north Alabama enjoyed a great economic victory when Remington Outdoor Company announced 2,000 new

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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